

## **Response from Churches to 2007 Charge Conference Questions**

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*Christian Conferencing on the theme:*

1. *Who in your neighborhood is not coming to your church on Sunday and why?*
2. *How can your church's worship, programming, mission, outreach and overall ministries be expanded or changed to reach out to these individuals?*
3. *Spend time together in prayer asking God to reveal God's dream for your local church and community. Make sure there is space in your prayer time for listening.*

### **Response from Swain Memorial on Sept. 5, 2007:**

1. Young parents. Ages 10-20. Why? Competition for time, want Sunday for leisure, church not as inviting.
2. UMW has tripled in attendance. Praise and worship played at homecoming. WVA envelopes. Child acolyte which brings the family of the child to church.

### **Response from Belle Haven-Bethel, Craddockville and Epworth on Sept. 6, 2007:**

1. Disabled older Americans, young people, parents working, Afro-American. Fear, other commitments, social importance, no invite, no interest. Family, neighbors, youth and children (because of parents not coming). Variety of things.

Catholic/different faith; Hispanic; change of lifestyle; miss one Sunday-easy not to go next Sunday; more moms than fathers come.

2. Have something to offer, need to reach out (visit). Reach the children to reach the parents (kids club quarterly) (MYF). Go someplace that you feel loved and wanted.

Block parties (close off street). Tues. & Thurs. after-school program. Incorporate them in church special programs and include parents in church service. Talk to them. Pick them up for church. Offer them a ride and talk to them out in the community. Communicate by cards, notes. Notes to visitors. Encourage use of visitor cards. Small groups. Have taping of ministry to shut-ins.

Outreach to youth? How? a. Outreach projects for all age groups; b. hang out with music, snacks, games, etc.; c. need for compatible adult leadership; d. congregation participate more with our Boy Scouts.

One day a week visitation. Go out from the walls of the church. Food to the sick and new neighbors. After-school. Work program and call in those unchurched for help. Prayer –Pentacost

### **Response from Oak Hall, Horntown and Greenbackville on September 11, 2007:**

1. Youth, parents of the youth, those invited, those of different lifestyles, those of different races.
2. People in trailer parks –some are elderly and can't come. Some can and won't come. Some are on drugs. Some had bad church experience. Outside activities take the place of church.

People have to work, sick and shut-ins and elderly. The elderly usually don't have transportation and can't get off on Sundays. Don't have clothes to wear or shoes.

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Dress down day or casual day. Youth in the neighborhood and some adults don't attend.

Males not attending. Younger children and older youth not attending (adults not bringing them). Services not appealing to young people. Parents need to spend more time with children.

Young adults. Teenagers-why?-parents don't go and encourage the youth to go. We are not going out into the community to talk and invite them in.

Captain's Cove. Young people. Trailer park. Trail's Inn. Other things to do on Sunday instead of going to church.

Relatives, children, ages 18-35. Elderly people would keep youth from coming to church. When children get older they don't attend. Need to get out in the community but fear of violence, guns, drugs keep the church from witnessing to the community. Members aren't active. Youth participation in sports and other activities in school. Churches need to pull together to get youth more involved in church programs instead of constant school activities.

Some people in the church got their feelings hurt. Young men who do not have a mother and father is incarcerated –sowing their oats and not ready to commit. People are afraid to expose their vulnerability and feelings. Surrounding trailer parks.

Social influence by the church family –they do not feel useful. Are not accepted in the church. Furniture and carpeting more important than souls.

Changes to reach them –visit more, social events, pray, learn to not judge, criticize be more like outsiders (dress down/casually).

Take tapes or videos to shut-ins. Try back yard Bible school. Send cards to past members. Put church information in plastic bag put on a ribbon and hang it on church door. Evening fellowship services Bible Study and prayer services.

Send invitations. Every 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday have a dinner and invite neighborhood. Prayer meetings for the neighborhood.

Implement things to appeal to children. Parents set positive example of behavior. Find ways to reach parents of the children. Outreach to the community. Adults setting better examples. Night service or other changes of schedule.

Make sure they know they don't have to dress up. God looking at our hearts not our clothes.

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Make tapes of service and share with shut-ins and nursing homes. Radio ministry. Praise and worship service monthly. Mission group to go out into the community.

We need to be mentored and also to mentor people with problems: drugs-single parents, pregnant teens, etc. (suggestion: different rooms-noise level. People should be counseled by professional before mentoring by us). We need to change ourselves inside before going outside. We need to change expectation of how new people should dress, etc.

Gather together our "doers" to form a nucleus to start to do things. Community activities together to tie us together. Tent revival and special music.

Services –have one contemporary and one traditional service to compromise needs. Have a tent revival and get other churches and youth involved. Have more meetings together instead of charge conference to discuss ways and fellowship with one another. Fellowship meal after communion Sunday to talk and dine with new converts to church/Christ. Having youth festivals Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>. Youth crusade.. Sharing activities (networking) with other churches. Sharing and caring!

We do not cross barriers in churches. Blacks don't attend white. Many white don't visit blacks. There is but one God. Worship is different. Black churches more vocal and energetic. Other churches quiet and serene. We must learn to accept and embrace each other's differences. Be open minded.

Prayer changes things. It also changes people.

Go to people, talk with them. Start to reach out to those who do not come by having a fellowship meal open and free to all. Invite them to prayer service, Bible study and Sunday school. Above all –pray for and with them.

Don't judge or criticize. Change our attitudes. Be understanding, more accepting of them whatever their dress.

Look for them!

### **Response from Franktown, Johnsons, and New Mission on September 23, 2007:**

1. New neighbors, retirement group-uninvolved, youth, parents are leaving children at home. Unusual demographics and geography –folks are spread out –no specific neighborhoods. Some neighbors are just unchurched –do not see the need for God in their lives.

Invited a Catholic neighbor and another who doesn't have a religious preference and doesn't believe in much of anything. Doesn't believe God is his answer. Most have gotten into the routine of not coming. Some feel they don't get recognition.

Young people –unsure why they do not come: location, age-retired, economy.

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People that work on Sundays. People that work 5 or 6 days a week so they do chores on Sunday. Children and teenagers don't attend because their parents won't or don't bring them or encourage them to come. Fear of youth participating in front of a large group.

2. Door to door. Loaves of bread. Meals to the neighborhood. Joining forces. Shepherding groups. Sharing your faith. New kinds of worship. Dinners for everyone.

Retirement group-uninvolved. Small membership churches cannot draw on the financial resources that larger membership churches can.

Revivals. Noon day prayer. Food. Community fellowship. Ice cream social. Theater. Shepherding Program. Visit shut-ins.

Mixed events: family fund day, grandparents' day, Christian band –include different churches together.

Church might need to realize their own strengths/weaknesses –Johnsons –older group. Franktown younger and mixed group.

Visitation by church members and "thinking of you" notes. Community based program with lots of activities for all ages.

### **Response from Atlantic-New Church, St. Johns and Christ on September 23, 2007:**

1. People who normally work.

Caucasian and Hispanic people in the community.

Only white attend. Not ethnically diverse. Large Russian summer population not reached. Men are lacking in contemporary service. Youth attendance. Many go to Baptist church.

Transient population –military, tourists.

All non-African American residents. People who work on Sunday. People who are in the lower income bracket. Youth and young adults. Anyone who isn't Caucasian. People who do not feel their "good enough" to attend.

The poor in Chincoteague and all areas. Young adults (college age). Campground vacation people. Preteens or early teenagers. Home-bound. Nursing home residents. Kids coming to VBS.

People who work late Sat. night want to sleep in Sunday a.m.

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Those who work Sundays (we offer no other services). Youth (we offer no youth oriented programs other than VBS). Young families (we have too few activities for families). Older member's children and grandchildren (not sure why). The folks who live nearest (not sure why).

"City folk" not interested in church...

2. Drive around the neighborhood and different streets to pray. Get more people involved with the church. Make others feel welcome. Honor other churches.

Offer different types of services –contemporary service reaches younger generation more and involves them in service. Evening praise and worship for those who can't make morning service.

Open "mic." for youth. Movie night. Food attacks. More communication between churches --notify of special events.

Go out into the communities as teams/groups to minister to their needs. Provide transportation.

Tent services. Play sports. Share resources –Bible study, sport events, etc.

Pray and put God first.

Take communion to the homebound. Take messages to nursing homes.

Have more things like VBS for kids in community more often that they can respond to.

Send letters to all in community to come to church. Hang door hangers about church.

Daily Bread and Upper Room –restrooms at work. Witness at work when appropriate. Prayer time on breaks –opened up to prayer time at private homes.

Offering a meal –no strings

### **Response from Snead Memorial, Painter-Quinby and New Hope on Oct. 1, 2007:**

1. Youth and children. Younger families. (Why not? Generations are ever changing, which has an affect on the individual's means of responsibility and commitment to attend. If parents don't attend, children don't attend (lack of transportation)

Harborton-so many people not coming. Mears is missing the older people. Snead fears people do not come because of money –feel when asked they are asking for money. Smith Chapel needs teenagers. Painter is blessed with small children, not many teens.

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Men in general (why they don't attend –time to relax, watch sports, politics of the church, afraid of appearing spiritual, upbringing, takes a man to get men to come to church.)

Children and youth –20-40 years old.

Those newly moved here, pre-teens and teenagers, parents of teens. Service is at 8 a.m.

Can't get 20-something to church. Teenagers.

More interested in other things. Some work on weekend. Parents don't come and they don't care about their children.

2. Develop and tailor ministries of interest. Develop a "safe night" for youth –i.e. Friday night gathering for Jr. High thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Develop spiritual –friendly relationships with our youth. Involve our youth in church and community oriented activities. Develop/create focus groups, youth panel discussions which could identify our youth's needs and interest.

Sharing our blessing, praying for people not coming, making a plan after the prayers.

Bible study. Free chicken and dumpling dinner asking our sister church and the community.

The face you show to the world. Willingness to change. Need to be understanding.

More flyers. More advertising on the radio and in the papers. Find the things that interest the teens. Invite the whole community to dinner and events. A choir or group for singing for the teens. Talk to church to see if worship time could be changed. Dress-down code for our youth. Speak to our visitors.

Too many churches. Merge together.

Provide transportation for children who do not have a way to go. Need youth coordinator that would have a central place to benefit youth and provide transportation.

### **Response from Sanford-Saxis, Hallwood and Pittsville-Pocomoke-Wattsville Oct. 2, 2007:**

1. Trailer park. Sunday workers. Young people. Transient families

People who don't want to come. People do not want to commit to anything. People need to be entertained.

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People who have children may provide us with the opportunity to invite them to church –the adults tend not to be so receptive themselves.

Most of the children in our church are our grandchildren.

2. Serve food. Incentives –offer gift card for attendance. Offer a ride to church. Check-on-me list –call if miss two or more Sundays.

Pray about it. Hung up on tradition. What do people see is us as witnessing for Christ:

Entertaining people with fun games and food might bring them in, but without those elements people don't seem enticed to attend. We do need to have special events to attract people. We can then hope they will continue to attend. We can and will pray!

Could have two services –one in English and the other in Spanish. Help people in the area who are having problems such as loss of electric in their home by contribution money and pray for them.

### **Response from Leemont, Cashville and Market Street Charges on Oct. 8, 2007:**

1. Mostly everyone belongs to other churches. Not interested.

Truck drivers on routes. 18-35 young adults. Healthcare staff. Unchurched –teenagers (in competition with secular world).

More young people.

Single men. Different faith neighbors. Children. Teens.

New people moving into the area (working in yard on Sunday).

Young people who go to sports instead of church on Sunday.

Members of church who go to another church.

Children who don't come to church.

People who get married in the church and then don't come back.

Shut-ins.

People who can't drive

People who have lost loved ones and stopped church.

New people moving into community.

People who use excuse –I'm here for a little while and don't want to attend service.

People prefer to attend a larger church. Type of music.

2. Offer people in the community to come to an event –health fair, harvest festival, bazaar, etc. or hymn sing. Offer the church as a meeting place. Invite others to church.

Pool resources to provide consistent continual programs. Let youth help develop programs and lead under adult mentoring. Utilizing Camp Occohannock for district sponsored youth programs.

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Consistency.

Flyers to invite people to your church (more of different ages). Youth group leaders for different ages –MYF group.

Lots of prayers.

Outreach: when new person visits recognize them –First time ushers. Bread.

Make house calls inviting them to church (offer a ride). Community picnic –feed them they will come. Personal contact –visitation.

Questionnaire list likes, dislikes about church. Be open to new ideas and be flexible.

Tape sermons (audio sermons)

Call them, visit and drive them to church.

Gatherings for elderly

Kids staff program (1 night)

After-School kids program

Outreach door to door invitation

Cards to one's monthly who do not come.

Reach out to the young people to drive them to church

Young people's newsletter

Teen hot line

Youth corner

Singles Ministry

Service too early needs to be different. Conflicts with time to take medication for some.

Church needs to be handicap accessible.

Incorporate "come as you are" dress attire for youth.

Make worship more interesting –incorporate a recreation among other churches.

### **Response from Melfa, Oceanview and Onley Charges on Oct. 9, 2007:**

1. Those that work six days-use Sunday for personal work and recreation  
Those not interested in church-younger generations parents do not attend  
Those who were hurt or no long attend.  
Young people  
Young couples  
Prisoners  
Youth and parents –non-members  
Non-active members
2. Membership care--contacting by visits, cards, etc.  
Reach out by mission.  
Accept people in worship and mission whether joining church or not.

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Remaining faithful to what you are doing and let God touch the hearts of people in time.  
Pray for all churches on E.S. and throughout world.  
Events outside of our church (Relay for Life)  
VBS, Bible study, fourth Sunday have hymn sing/praise Sunday evening  
Time slots different -8:30 etc.  
More musical groups

Neighbor day; Jail ministry; Angel tree; Book packs for children; Prayer time for outreach;  
Start youth programs and consistently implement; Call and invite non-active members

### **Response from Cheriton and Cape Charles-Capeville on October 14, 2007:**

1. Ages 20-30 something; nothing of interest; no child care; competing priorities—so much going on; competing activities; not reaching out to neighbors

Tourists

Young adults –family unit, church doesn't appeal

Young couples; people working; some members; varied socio-economic & racial & cultural; home bound (illness & aged)

Youth (Why? Drug addictions that hinder from attending; not a priority—too many outside activities)

Adults (20-30 years old); members; adults (30-40 years old); adults (40-50 years old); Kids (Why? Kids not included in church worship)

Unchurched -street/other denominations/disenfranchised

Spanish speaking people

(Why? Curriculums no up to 21<sup>st</sup> century –videos, etc. modern classes; uninviting rooms –4 white walls; attitude of members; outside activities; not interested; dress codes; failed classes –attempts made then no more made to reach members/community; personal conflicts that are against church principles (i.e.: soldiers killed in war; feel they're not worthy; God not there.)

Blacks or African-Americans (Why? Worship style)

Family (Why? Don't want to/turned off)

Retired (Why? Don't want to/turned off)

Ages 20-30 something (Why? Boring/non relevant/other faith)

Nurses (Why? don't know them)

Youth (Why? Church not offering what they want; church attractive to traditional people only)

Latinos (Why? Don't know any)

Children (Why? Don't have young married couples)

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2. Upgrade –progress with the times; Change in worship style; prepare for different people

When you don't know the real reason. Do what they want. Time, effects other church. Lot of youth work. Set aside time for youth.

Children's festival for three day weekend with all four churches combined.

Provide transportation

Do jointly with other churches: provide meals for needy and homeless, etc. on certain days

Do jointly with other churches: Community Thanksgiving monthly/weekly meals  
Provide youth/teen programs; provide more contemporary services.

Offer Spanish leaders church

Update Sunday School studies

Outreach go to these peoples societal circles and invite them

List of members and revisit them and encourage them

If we knew what to do we would do it. Be willing to do what it takes.

More activities for youth; connecting relationships; strong Sunday School program; visibility –churches are not on highway; build a central interchange worship or ministry center; when you have a function –reach out!

### **Response from Guilford, Grace, Calvary and Accomac Charges on Oct. 29, 2007:**

1. Kids –cause parents don't want them to  
Language barrier  
Those who work during church, those who work late  
People who just tune off God  
Wrong church  
Not worthy  
Wrong time  
Two working families –Sunday a day together  
People who come to church and then leave because of some reason  
Get out of the habit of church  
Youth  
Other churches –Catholics are expanding  
Younger parents  
Minorities (Why? Not going out to invite them.)  
Youth  
Children  
People not coming because events in church don't draw even from other churches -have trouble working together
2. Translator helper for language barrier

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Door-to-door ministries  
Offer rides to those who want to come  
Meals to the communities  
After-School  
Communications (phone, internet)  
Combined youth groups  
Parties at church  
Youth programs to entice children –thus, hopefully parents will follow  
Sponsor Scouting programs  
Parents Night Out –Friday night  
Early worship on Sunday –informal –come as you are  
Vacation Bible school  
Special occasions  
Once a month community dinner  
Parents need to be involved  
The church prayer time-pray for angry neighbor  
Gentle pushes  
Take worship into the home  
Invite voice from the community into the choir  
Meals for 55 and over  
Once a month to gather together for prayer for our conference  
We have to get the word out to other churches, what's going on  
Reach out to people who are not going to church  
Be an example